

BETH ANN FENNELLY

Because People Ask What My Daughter Will Think of My Poems When She's Sixteen

Daughter, the light of
the future is apricot,
and in it you are not
the thigh-child pointing
her earnest index finger
to the yellow balloon clearing
the willows and drifting
higher, you're the balloon. I'm
the grasping hand. Or I'm
the *oo* in *balloon*. I'll meet you
there. I'm the brown
strings, formerly violets, you
didn't water. I'm the hole
in the photo, you're the un-
safety scissors. I'm the lint
in the corners of my purse
after you steal the coins,
brown-bag lunch you pitch
after leaving my house, buttons
you undo after I've okayed
your blouse. Poems
you burn in the sink. Poems

that had to go and use
your name, never mind
that soon you'll be sixteen, hate
your name. I'm the resemblance
you deny, fat ass
you hope your boyfriends
never see. I'll meet you
there, that is my promise
and my threat, with this
yellow balloon as my
witness, even if I'm
dead, I'll meet you there.